

POWELL COUNTY, Ky.

Hubley WPA ①

POWELL COUNTY, central eastern Kentucky on western border of Eastern Coal Field, is bounded on the N. by Montgomery and Menifee Counties, on the E. by Wolfe County, on the S. by Estill and Lee Counties and on the W. by Clark County; 71 m. SE. of Frankfort 120 m. S. of Covington, 123 m. SE. of Louisville, 173 m. N. of Middlesboro; elevations to 1,300 ft.; 181.83 sq. m. (115,840 acres), 111th in size.

Population is 5,800, a density of 32 against State average of 65.1, a decrease of 643 persons, or 10 percent, since 1900; 5,618 native born white, 4 foreign born white, 178 Negro residents; 116th in population and 100th in population density; entire population classified as rural, divided into 4,347 rural farm and 1,453 rural non-farm; 284 persons, or 24.7 percent over 65 years of age; Negro population decreased 197, or 52.5 percent, since 1900.

STANTON (9662 alt., 423 pop.), the county seat, is a sixth class incorporated city, situated on the flood plain of the Red River. It has a public water system and is supplied with gas and electricity by a privately owned company. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad and a bus line to Winchester, Ky. serve the town. A brick plant is located here.

STATISTICS: The assessment for county purposes for 1935 was \$2,651,456, or \$-----per capita, while the taxable value of all land and improvements was \$-----. The county tax rates are as follows: school, 75¢; real estate, 50¢, State, 05¢ and poll, \$-----. Stanton has a school tax of \$-----and a poll tax of \$-----. Bonded indebtedness of the county is \$-----, with a floating debt of \$-----. Stanton has a bonded indebtedness of \$-----.

A total of-----automobiles were licensed in 1936, with an average value of \$-----.

There are-----banks in the county, ---- at Stanton and --- at Clay City; total bank deposits of \$-----.

Powell County has a total of 28.8 m. of State maintained highways, of which 17.1 m. are blacktop, 1.04 m. reinforced concrete and remainder gravel; 176 m. of improved and unimproved county roads.

The county court house and the county jail, both built of brick, are well ventilated, sanitary and in good condition. Indigent persons are boarded with private families, who are paid for this service from the paupers' fund.

TOPOGRAPHY: The western part of the county is in the Knobs and the eastern part is on the edge of the Cumberland Plateau. Normal relief is about 450 ft. and maximum about 750 ft.; lowest elevations, about 600 ft., beginning at junction of Lulbegrud Creek and Red River, while knobs on N. and ridge lands to E. rise to elevations of 1,200 and 1,300 ft.

The Red River and its tributaries drain the county. Sheet erosion, with occasional gullies, occurs throughout Oldham County, but is not severe except in the extreme western part and is only slight along the entire southern border.

NATURAL RESOURCES include outstanding scenery, fair farm lands, adequate water supply and various minerals.

Petroleum, the principal mineral, is found on the head of Red River, closely adjacent to the Estill and Lee County lines. It has not been extensively developed since 1927, although formerly 200,000 barrels per year were produced. Natural gas has also been produced in Oldham County, it being developed on the head waters of Cane Creek, near the Meniffee County line.

Limestones in the county, only slightly utilized, are suitable for highway, railroad bed and general rural building construction. Some of them are also usable as cement materials and others for agricultural lime.

Certain limestone beds, high in calcareous content, could be used in metaliferous industries for fluxing purposes. A group of the county's alluvial and residual clays are suitable for brick and tile manufacture and in commercial cement materials. Several thin coal seams are used for domestic purposes.

The Chattanooga (Devonian) oil shale outcrops in considerable thickness over a very broad territory in the western part of the county. Although representing a valuable potential supply for the manufacture of artificial petroleum and its by-products, this oil shale is not being used extensively, because of unprofitable competition with present petroleum production. It is estimated that the county's oil shale will produce approximately 16,75 gal. of crude oil and 8,000 cu. ft. of gas per short ton of shale.

AGRICULTURE engages 1,205 persons, or 69.8 percent of the county's 1,726 gainful workers on 1,012 farms, covering 86,877 acres. The area of the county in farms is 75 percent, with the best farm land along the Red River. There are 30,807 acres, or 26.5 percent of the total area, available for crops; 23,577 acres, or 20.4 percent, in plowable, woodland and other pasture; 41,758 acres in non-pastured woodland on farm lands. In 1934, 13,614 acres were harvested, 4,908 acres were idle, or fallow, and crop failures resulted on 116 acres.

Six hundred and forty farms are operated by sole owners, 38 farms by part owners and 334 farms by tenants, of whom 71 are share croppers. The value of farm lands and buildings is \$1,395,288; average value per farm, \$1,379; average value per acres, \$16.06, with the average farm containing 85.8 acres.

The principal crop is corn, with hay next, followed by tobacco. In 1934, corn for grain on 9,007 acres produced 228,308 bushels; hay for forage, 3,028 acres, 3,422 tons; tobacco, 284 acres, 177,968 pounds. Other crops were as follows: oats, 20 acres; Irish potatoes, 85 acres, 6,985 bushels; sweet potatoes, 53 acres, 4,948 bushels; wheat, 14 acres, 190 bushels. Korean lespedeza has shown a large increase in the last several years, replacing soy beans and cow peas as a feed crop.

INDUSTRY, other than agriculture, provides employment as follows: manufacturing, 145 workers, 8.4 percent; retail and wholesale business and service establishments, 102, 5.9 percent. The retail trade consists of 65 stores, 70 proprietors, 14 employees; wholesale trade, two firms, five employees, 10 service establishments, 10 proprietors and 3 part time employees. The only manufacturing of any importance takes place at the brick plant in Stanton, although there are several sawmills in the county. HEALTH in the county has been considerably improved since 1912. There is a full-time health unit, consisting of a doctor, a nurse and one clerk and in recent years the health department has made great strides in the education of the people in disease prevention, health promotion and particularly in the immunization of children against communicable diseases.

The county death rate from all causes was reduced from 136.4 per 10,000 persons in 1912 ^{to 86.0} and ~~100.0~~ in 1935, which compares to the State average of 129.0 in 1912 and 108.0 in 1935. The county death rate for tuberculosis in 1935 was 13.79 against the State average of 8.59. Death rates from all other diseases in the county were negligible in 1935.

EDUCATION: The county school system is administered by the county board of education and the county school superintendent, with sub-district trustees retaining a large degree of control over appointment of teachers outside of the Stanton district. There are 31 one-teacher schools, 5 two-teacher schools, a seven-teacher elementary school and a high school with a principal

and eight teachers. The school census is 2,028 with an average daily attendance of 1,522 and of the latter approximately 63 percent are pupils of one-room schools. Two of the one-room schools are attended by Negro pupils, of whom there are approximately 90.

The Powell County High and Elementary Schools are both at Stanton and have a total daily attendance of 363, or approximately 24 percent of the total daily attendance in the county. The high school is a class A institution, with an enrollment of 175. It is housed in a brick building containing six classrooms, a small auditorium-study hall and laboratories for work in home economics, agriculture and the physical sciences.

RECREATION: Natural Bridge State Park, in the extreme southeastern part of the county, offers various recreational opportunities. It is the second largest State Park in Kentucky, with an acreage of 1,137. Other recreational facilities are provided by the School gymnasiums and playgrounds.

PUBLIC WORKS are confined to WPA projects, the principal work being community sanitation and road construction.

PUBLICATIONS: The Clay City Times is a weekly newspaper with a circulation of 1,000.

ANNUAL EVENTS

POINTS OF INTEREST include two rock shelters, which formerly contained numerous Indian artifacts and were sites of Indian burials; Natural Bridge State Park, a high elevation known as High Rocks, and the old mill race at Clay City.

Three Indian skeletons, in an unusually good State of preservation,

a number of trinkets, including beads made of the tips of deer's horns and several sheets of mica were excavated at the Ed Hale Rock Shelter, or "Ash Cave," one mi. N. of Route 15, near Slade, Ky. Discovery of pot-shards and arrow heads in the shelter led to the excavation work. The skeletons, those of a man, woman and child, had been buried face downward.

The Stephen Dehart Rock Shelter, one-half ^{mi.} ~~mile~~ N. of Lombard Post Office, is one of the largest and finest in this region. At this site three burial places have been excavated and a large number of Indian artifacts recovered, including leather mocassins, bone awls, three limestone hoes, shellspoons and pieces of a broken mud kettle.

A number of natural sandstone bridges occur in the Upper Red River valley. One of the most accessible of these, which is in Natural Bridge State Park, is the largest and most impressive natural structure of its kind in Kentucky.

High Rocks, four and one-half miles south of Bowen, Ky., on the Bowen-Pilot Road, is the highest point in this section, with an elevation of 2,200 ft. It affords an excellent vantage point for viewing the surrounding country. From its summit can be seen almost all of Powell County, as well as parts of Lee, Estill, Montgomery, Menifee and Wolfe Counties. There are two observation towers, one a wooden structure, erected in 1928 by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the other, of steel construction, 40 feet high, was built in 1934 by the U. S. Forest Service. It is used as a look-out for forest fires.

HISTORY: Powell County, the 101st to be formed, was established in 1852 out of parts of Montgomery, Clark and Estill Counties and named in honor of the Hon. Lazarus W. Powell, then Governor of Kentucky. Its boundaries were established as all those parts of Montgomery, Clarke and Estill Counties within the following boundaries, to-wit: beginning at the point where the division line of the county of Owsley and Morgan intersect the

line of Montgomery county; thence with the Morgan and Montgomery line to the Montgomery and Bath line; thence with the Bath and Montgomery line to the top of the dividing ridge between the waters of Red River and Slate Creek; thence with the top of said ridge or mountain to the point where the road, leading from French's mill to Mount Sterling, crosses the mountain, which point is known as Morris' mountain; thence in a straight line to a point at or near the mouth of Black creek; thence in a straight line so as to leave the residence of Andrew Lowell in Estill county, to a point on top of the ridge that divides the waters of Red River from those of the Kentucky where the Montgomery and Estill lines there intersect; thence with said ridge to the intersection of the Montgomery, Estill and Owsley lines; thence with the Montgomery and Owsley lines to the beginning; shall be and the same is hereby stricken from said counties and erected into one distinct county, to be called----Powell". Parts of its territory were taken later to form Wolfe County in 1869 and Lee County in 1870.

The public buildings and records of Powell County were destroyed by fire in the spring of 1863. Life and property of the citizens were often threatened during the Civil War by lawless bands and frequently they had to take refuge in the woods and mountains.

PLANNING:

Bird C. Greer - 2/13/41
D. Mitchell - (Typ.)

NATURAL BRIDGE STATE PARK

A gift of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company, the State park is composed of 1,127 acres located in Powell and Wolf counties. The bridge is situated on the boundary-line between the two counties.

... In addition to its attractions as a scenic point, Natural Bridge State park also is an ideal health resort.

... Since November, 1933, when the National park service included the Natural Bridge state parks in its system, many improvements have been completed.

Pub. Library
Lexington-Herald, May 6, 1935
Nat. Bridges, Ky. State Park, Book III
Stanton, Ky., May 4 ?

The span eighty feet long, twenty-five feet wide and ten feet thick at the top, forms a perfect arch forty feet above the floor. The stone extends to form a canopy 200 feet long and fifty feet high. The floor of the cavern extends sixty feet from the lip of the overhang to the rear wall and is covered six or seven feet deep with ashes of campfires and refuse from the foot of countless generations of Indians.

Natural Bridge park is 130 miles east of Louisville and 33 miles east of Lexington. Its scenic value is said to be the highest in Kentucky. The railroad has built a six-acre lake in the park, which is ten feet deep and used for boating, fishing and swimming. It takes its name from the gigantic formation known as Kentucky Natural Bridge.

Pub. Library
Lexington Herald, May 6, 1935
Nat. Bridge Kentucky State Park, Book III (?)

Courier-Journal Aug. 4, 1935

200 words -

Natural Bridge State Park in Powell and Wolfe counties, 1, 127 acres of "hill" country, with the noted Kentucky Natural Bridge, from which it's name is derived. It is of balanced rock, lagoon and flower garden, "hiking" paths and rugged scenery. Located near Slade, Ky., reached by State Route 15. The great natural bridge is said to contain 15,000,000 pounds of rock and is 30-feet wide.

Ref. Ser. - Herald June 2/35

Natives gave Natural Bridge the name of "Lighthouse Rock," which in reality is a rock house extending through the cliff to the other side of the mountain.

✓ Located $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Kentucky, Route 15 at Slade.

(To be added to material already on file.)

Pub. Library
Clippings
Natural Bridge, Ky. State Park - Book II

Lexington Herald, Dec. 22, 1936
45 words

The Kentucky Natural Bridge takes its name from the gigantic formation which is said to contain more than 15,000,000 pounds of rock.

Courier-Journal - Sept. 23, 1934

POWELL COUNTY

WPA

NATURAL BRIDGE STATE PARK LAKE. The Kentucky Union Land Company sold the railroad and the 137-acre tract of land containing Natural Bridge in 1895 to the Lexington and Eastern Railway Company, which developed it into a private park into which to run excursions on Sundays and holidays. The railroad built a dam across the creek to form a lake for swimming and boating.

Located $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Kentucky, Route 15 at Slade.

Pub. Library
Clippings, "Civilian Conservation Corps at Natural Bridge
Article by T. G. Strunk - Lexington Herald
12/22/36 - 100 words

3 X 5 ✓

POWELL, LAZARUS WHITEHEAD

(Oct. 6, 1812 - July 3, 1867), governor of Kentucky, senator, was born in Henderson County, Ky., the third son of Lazarus and Ann (Melihon) Powell. His formal schooling was begun in his home county, and he graduated from St. Joseph's College in Bardstown, Ky., in 1833. He immediately began to study law under John Rowan at Bardstown, and continued his course in law at Transylvania University in Lexington, where he enjoyed the excellent lectures of George Robertson. On his admission to the bar in 1835 he formed at Henderson a partnership with Archibald Dixon, which lasted for four years. He also became interested in agriculture, and as a planter he added to his fortune.

Attracted by the opportunity for a political career, he ran as a Democrat for the lower branch of the state legislature in 1836 and was elected. He failed to be re-elected and resumed the practice of law. On Nov. 8, 1837, he married Harriet Ann Jennings who bore him three sons and died in 1846. By 1848 he had attained a prominence that got for him the nomination for the governorship, but he found it impossible to defeat a whig of the strength of John C. Crittenden. In 1851, running against his former law partner, Archibald Dixon, he obtained the election and became the first Democratic governor since the days of Andrew Jackson. Failing to capture the legislature, he found it necessary to veto many bills during his four years of office. In January, 1858 he was elected to the federal Senate for the term to begin on March 4, 1859, and in April following his election he was appointed by President Buchanan to be one of the two commissioners to go to Utah to seek to compromise the difficulties there. Though of strong Southern sympathies, he did not favor the secession of Kentucky; yet he rejected the idea of the coercion of the South He looked with many misgivings on the war waged by the Union against the Confederacy, and

throughout the struggle he opposed the Government's policy of political arrests and military interference with elections. The Kentucky legislature in Oct. 1861 requested his resignation; and shortly thereafter his colleague, Garret Davis introduced resolutions for his expulsion. The Senate refused to expel him; and before the end of the war both his State and his colleague admitted that they had been wrong, and he had been right.

After the expiration of his term on Mar. 3, 1865, he returned to his home in Kentucky, where he continued the practice of law. In 1866 he attended the Johnson convention in Philadelphia, and the next year he was a strong contender before the Kentucky legislature for the Senate. On the first ballot he received a higher vote than any other person, but finally he lost to Garret Davis. Six months later he died of apoplexy at his home near Henderson. The next year, a state thoroughly chastened by its war experiences voted to erect a monument over his grave and to have prepared at the expense of the state 3,800 copies of his biography. Previously, in 1852, the state had created a new county and named it for him.

(E.M.C.)

Dictionary of American Biography

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